

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY LISBON

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USCINCEUR

USLOSACLANT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 3954

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PO

SUBJ: PORTUGUESE FORCE MODERNIZATION: THE NAVY

REF: LISBON 4590 (DTG 081706Z JUL 76)

1. WE RECOGNIZE THE SENSITIVE POLITICAL PROBLEM POSED (REFTEL) IN ESTABLISHING A REAL DIALOGUE WITH THE PORTUGUESE NAVY ON ITS NATO ROLE AND MODERNIZATION NEEDS. WE ARE NOT SANGUINE, HOWEVER, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHATEVER FIGLEAF OF ALLIANCE ENDORSEMENT IS BESTOWED ON THE NAVY'S ROLE, THAT SUCH ENDORSEMENT CAN BE TRANSLATED INTO SIGNIFICANT ASSISTANCE FROM OUR NATO PARTNERS.

2. WE HAVE INFORMALLY CONSULTED WITH UK AND FRG REPS, WHO ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THEIR AUTHORITIES PROVIDING MUCH HELP TO THE PORTUGUESE NAVY. THE UK IS DISCUSSING WITH THE PORTUGUESE THE POSSIBLE SALE (PROBABLY ON A CONCESSIONAL BASIS) OF A USED MINESWEEPER THAT WILL REQUIRE WORK AT PORTUGUESE EXPENSE. THE FRG INTENDS TO FOCUS ITS ASSIST-
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ANCE (AFTER THE GERMAN ELECTIONS) ON THE ARMY BRIGADE. OUTSIDE OF SOME POSSIBLE TRAINING AND AT BEST LIMITED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, LITTLE ELSE CAN BE EXPECTED FROM OUR OTHER PARTNERS. CONSEQUENTLY, UNLESS THE US IS PREPARED

TO UNDERWRITE THE NAVY'S MODERNIZATION PROGRAM, PORTUGUESE
EXPECTATIONS ARE LIKELY TO BE MISLED AT THE OUTSET, IF
THEIR ASPIRATIONS FOR NEW FRIGATES CANNOT BE DEFLECTED.
STRAUSZ-HUPE

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